

AEROBIC EXERCISE

Developing Your Personal Aerobics Plan

You're convinced—aerobic exercise can strengthen your heart, improve your body's use of oxygen, and contribute to your overall health. So, where do you begin? First, find your target heart range (THR). Then, select aerobic activities that fit your physical condition, personal interests, and environment. Finally, make a commitment to exercise aerobically for 20-30 minutes a minimum of 3 times a week.

Finding Your THR







Your THR is the safest range of heartbeats per minute during exercise. To find your approximate THR, subtract your age from 220 and multiply the answer by 60% and by 80%. Aim for the low range when you first begin, gradually working up to the higher range. Count your heartbeats by taking your wrist or neck pulse for 15 seconds and multiplying the count by 4. If you have an existing medical condition or family history of heart disease, your healthcare professional can determine your best THR.

Choosing the Right Aerobics

With so many activities to choose from, you may not know which aerobics are best for you. In most cases, the best activities are those that you will enjoy and will keep up with. They are also the ones that are appropriate for your age and physical condition. The list of aerobic activities at right can help you with your choices.

Scheduling Time For Aerobics

In order to be effective, aerobics should be done for at least 20-30 minutes a minimum of 3 times a week. In less time than the average TV "sitcom" you can actively enjoy yourself while you improve your health. You can also find ways to fit aerobics into your busy schedule—walk during lunch, bicycle to work, invite a friend to a game of handball rather than out for drinks. It's a question of priorities. When you set fitness and health as a personal priority, you'll find time for fitness.

ACTIVITY	BENEFITS	DRAWBACKS
 Walking	Excellent overall conditioner; can be done by almost anyone.	Takes most people longer to reach THR; can be harder to fit into busy schedules.
 Jogging/Running	Excellent overall conditioner. Requires no equipment other than shoes.	Can stress bones and joints; can be too strenuous for beginners/overweight persons.
 Swimming	Exercises large muscles in legs, arms and chest; does not stress bones and joints.	Must have access to pool; may be poor choice for people with chlorine sensitivity.
 Bicycling	Exercises large muscles in legs; does not stress bones and joints.	Must purchase equipment; can be difficult to pursue in poor weather or in very hilly areas.
 Aerobic Dancing	Excellent overall conditioner; can be done in class and/or at home.	Requires instruction (class, videotape, etc.); high-impact can stress bones and joints.
 Handball/Racquetball	Excellent overall conditioner when done correctly; a social activity.	Requires partner, equipment and facilities; can be too strenuous for beginners.

Reaping the Rewards

Once you've made the commitment to a regular aerobic exercise program, you'll know that you're doing one of the nicest things possible for yourself—you're strengthening your heart, keeping your body in shape, and improving your quality of life. You'll have more stamina, a brighter outlook, and a sense of commitment and control over life that will enable you to handle life's daily challenges.

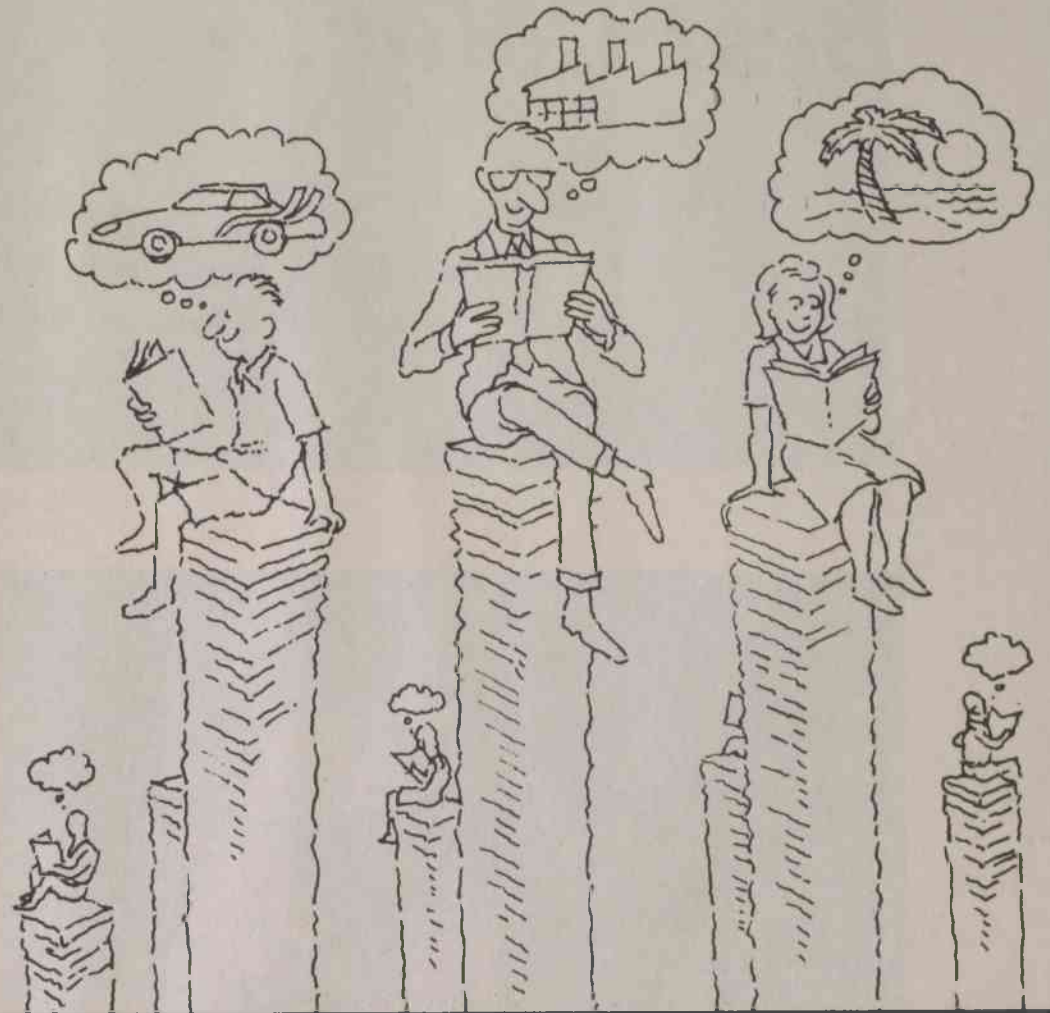
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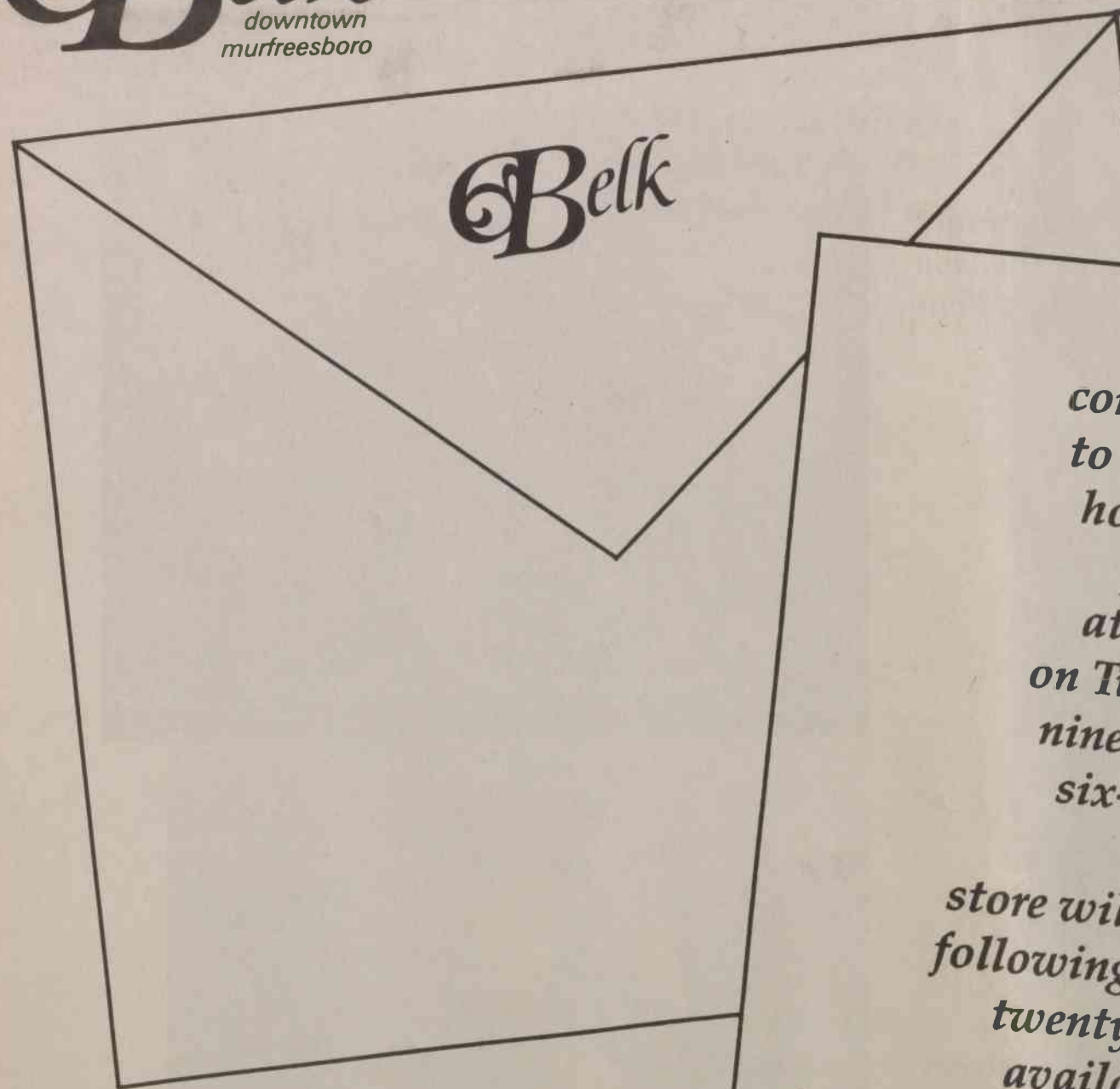
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